

## Letter from George Rogers Clark to George Mason, November 19, 1779

Letter from General George Roger to His Friend and Patron George Mason of Gunston Hall, Virginia

Louisville, Falls of Ohio, Nov. 19, 1779

My Dear Sir:

Continue to favor me with your valuable lessons---continue your reprimands as though I was your son--when suspicious, think not that promotion, or conferred honor, will occasion any unnecessary pride in me. You have infused too many of your valuable precepts in me to be guilty of the like, or to show any indifference to those that ought to be dear to me. It is with pleasure that I obey in transmitting to you a short sketch of my enterprise and proceeding in the Illinois, as near as I can recollect, or gather from memorandums.

After disengaging myself from Kentucky I set out for Williamsburg in August, 1777, in order to settle my accounts. I had just reasons, known to few but myself, that occasioned me to resolve not to have any further command whatever, without I should find a very great call for troops and my country in danger; in such case I was determined to lose my life rather (than) we should submit. On my arrival, I found, to appearance, a friend in many gentlemen of note; that offered their interest to me in case I should offer at any post. Many (were) surprised that I would not solicit for some berth. I must confess that I think myself often to blame for not making use of interest for my promotion, but to merit it first is such a fixed principle with me that I never could, and I hope never shall, ask for a post of honor, as I think the public ought to be the best judge whether a person deserves it or not; if he did he would certainly be rewarded according to the virtue they had. But finding that we were in (an) alarming situation, the Indians desperate on one side, the Britains on the other, I immediately resolved to encourage an expedition to the Illinois. But to make it public was a certain loss of it. I proposed the plan to a few gentlemen; they communicated it to the governor; it was immediately determined on, to (be) put in execution as soon as a bill could be passed to enable the governor to order it. It accordingly passed, though but a few in the House knew the real intent of it. After giving the council all the intelligence I possibly could, I resolved to pursue my other plans. But being desired by the governor to stay some time in town, I waited with impatience, he, I suppose, believing that I wanted the command, and was determined to give it to me, but it was far from my inclination at that time. I was summoned to attend the council board; the instructions and necessary papers were ready for putting in the name of the person to command. I believe they expected me to solicit for it, but I resolved not to do so, for reasons I hinted you before. However, I expected it after being told the command of this little army was designed for me. I then got every request granted, and (was) fully empowered to raise as many men as I could, not exceeding a certain number. After being engaged I was then as determined to prosecute it with vigor as I was before indifferent about the command. I had, since the beginning of the war, taken pains to make myself acquainted with the true situation of the British posts on the frontiers, and since find that I was not mistaken in my judgment. I was ordered to attack the Illinois---in case of success to carry my arms to any quarter I pleased. I was certain that with five hundred men I could take the Illinois, and by my treating the inhabitants as fellow-citizens, and (showing) them that I meant to protect rather than treat them as a conquered people---engaging the Indians to our interest, etc.---it might probably have so great an effect on their

countrymen at Detroit (they already disliked their master), that it would be an easy prey for me. I should have mentioned my design to His Excellency, but was convinced or afraid that it might lessen his esteem for me, as it was a general opinion that it would take several thousand to approach that place. I was happy with the thoughts of fair prospects of undeceiving the public respecting their formidable enemies on our frontiers. I left Williamsburg, January the 18th, made as quick dispatch as possible to the frontiers, and by the end of the month had recruiting parties disposed from Pittsburg to Carolina; had my little army recruited in half the time I expected.

Elevated with the thoughts of the great service we should do our country, in some measure putting an end to the Indian war on our frontiers, it may appear to you to be a mere presumption in me, but I was always too jealous of my self to be far wrong in plans that I had so long studied, and since find that I could have executed it with the greatest ease if it had not been (for the) following conduct of many leading men in the frontiers that had liked to have put an end to the enterprise: Not knowing my destination, and through a spirit of obstinacy, they combined and did everything that lay in their power to stop the men that had enlisted, and set the whole frontiers in an uproar, even condescended to harbor and protect those that deserted. I found my case desperate---the longer I remained the worse it was. I plainly saw that my principal design was baffled. I was resolved to push to Kentucky with what men I could gather in West Augusta, being joined by Captains Bowman and Helm who had each raised a company for the expedition, but two-thirds of them was stopped by the undersigned enemies to the country that I before mentioned. In the whole, I had about one hundred and fifty men collected, and set sail for the falls. I had, previous to this, received letters from Captain Smith, on Holdston, informing me that he intended to meet me at that place with near two hundred men, which encouraged me much, as I was in hopes of being enabled by that reinforcement at least to attack the Illinois with a probability of success, etc.

I set out from Redstone the 12th of May, leaving the country in great confusion, much distressed by the Indians. General Hand, pleased with my intentions, furnished me with every necessary I wanted, and the --- of May I arrived at the Kanawha river, to the joy of the garrison, as they were very weak and had the day before been attacked by a large body of Indians.

Being joined by Captain Oharrard's company on his way to the Osark, after spending a day or two we set out and had a very pleasant voyage to the falls of Ohio; having sent expresses to the stations on Kentucky from the mouth of the river, for Captain Smith to join me immediately, as I made no doubt but that he was waiting for me. But you may easily guess at my mortification on being informed that he had not arrived; that all his men had been stopped by the incessant labors of the populace, except part of a company that had arrived under the command of one Captain Dillard, some on their march being threatened to be put into prison if they did not return. This information made me as desperate as I was before determined.

Reflecting on the information that I had of some of my greatest opponents censuring the governor for his conduct, as they thought, ordering me for the protection of Kentucky only. That, and some other secret impulses, occasioned me, in spite of all counsel, to risk the expedition to convince them of their error, until that moment secret to the principal officers I had. I was sensible of the impression it would have on many; to be taken near a thousand (miles) from the body of their country to attack a people five times their number, and merciless tribes of Indians, their allies, and determined enemies to us.

I knew that my case was desperate, but the more I reflected on my weakness, the more I was pleased with the enterprise. Joined by a few Kentuckians under Colonel Montgomery, to stop the desertion I knew would ensue on the troops knowing their destination, I had encamped on a small island in the middle of the falls, kept strict guards on the boats, but Lieutenant Hutchings, of Dillard's company, contrived to make his escape with his party, after being refused leave to return. Luckily a few of his men (were) taken the next day by a party sent after them. On this island I first began to discipline my little army, knowing that to be the most essential point towards success. Most of them determined to follow me; the rest,

seeing no probability of making their escape. I soon got that subordination as I could wish for. About twenty families that had followed me, much against my inclination, I found now to be of service to me in guarding a blockhouse that I had erected on the island to secure my provisions.

I got everything in readiness (and) on the 26th \* [A mistake. It was the 24th, the day of the great eclipse of the sun.] of June, set off from the falls, double-manned our oars and proceeded day and night until we ran into the mouth of the Tennessee river; the fourth day landed on an island to prepare ourselves for a march by land. A few hours after, we took a boat of hunters, but eight days from Kaskaskias. Before I would suffer them to answer any person a question, after taking the oath of allegiance, I examined them particularly. They were Englishmen, [Probably meant only that they were of the English race, the inhabitants of Kaskaskia and the Illinois country being generally of French origin.] and appeared to be in our interest; their intelligence was not favorable. They asked leave to go on the expedition; I granted it and ordered them what to relate particularly, on pain of suffering. They observed my instructions, which put the whole in the greatest spirits---sure by what they heard of success. In the evening of the same day, I ran my boats into a small creek about one mile above the old Fort Massack, reposed ourselves for the night, and in the morning took a route to the northwest and had a very fatiguing journey for about fifty miles, until we came into those level plains that (are) frequent throughout this extensive country. As I knew my success depended on secrecy, I was much afraid of being discovered in these meadows, as we might be seen in many places for several miles.

Nothing extraordinary happened during our (march, except) my guide (John Sanders) losing himself and not being able, as we judged by his confusion, of giving a just account of himself. It put the whole troops in the greatest confusion. I never in my life felt such a flow of rage---to be wandering in a country where every nation of Indians could raise three or four times our number, and a certain loss of our enterprise by the enemies getting timely notice. I could not bear the thought of returning. In short, every idea of the sort put me in that passion that I did not master for some time; but, in a short time after, our circumstances had a better appearance, for I was in a moment determined to put the guide to death if he did not find his way that evening. I told him his doom. The poor fellow, scared almost out of his wits, begged that I would stay a while where I was and suffer him to go and make some discovery of a road that could not be far from us, which I would not suffer, for fear of not seeing him again, but ordered him to lead on the party---that his fate depended on his success. After some little pause, he begged that I would not be hard with him, that he could find the path that evening. He accordingly took his course, and, in two hours, got within his knowledge.

On the evening of the 4th of July, we got within three miles of the town (of) Kaskaskia, having a river of the same name to cross to the town. After making ourselves ready for anything that might happen, we marched after night to a farm that was on the same side of the river, about a mile above the town, took the family prisoners and found plenty of boats to cross in, and in two hours transported ourselves to the other shore with the greatest silence.

I learned that they had some suspicion of being attacked and had made some preparations---keeping out spies---but they, making no discoveries, had got off their guard. I immediately divided my little army into two divisions. Ordered one to surround the town. With the other, I broke into the fort---secured the governor, Mr. Rochblave; in fifteen minutes had every street secured; sent runners through the town ordering the people, on pain of death, to keep close to their houses, which they observed, and before daylight had the whole town disarmed. Nothing could excel the confusion these people seemed to be in, being taught to expect nothing but savage treatment from the Americans. Giving all for lost---their lives were all they could dare beg for, which they did with greatest fervency---they were willing to be slaves to save their families. I told them it did not suit me to give them an answer at that time. They repaired to their houses, trembling as if they were led to execution; my principles would not suffer me to distress such a number of people, except through policy it was necessary. A little reflection convinced me that it was my interest to attach them to me---according to my first plan---for the town of Cohos (Cahokia) and St. Vincent, and the numerous tribes of Indians attached to the French, (were) yet to influence, for I was

too weak to treat them any other way. I sent for all the principal men of the town, who came in as if to a tribunal that was to determine their fate forever, cursing their fortune that they were not apprised of us time enough to have defended themselves. I told them that I was sorry to find that they had been taught to harbor so base an opinion of the Americans and their cause; explained the nature of the dispute to them in as clear a light as I was capable of. It was certain that they were a conquered people, and, by the fate of war, was at my mercy, and that our principle was to make those we reduced free, instead of enslaving them as they imagined; that if I could have surety of their zeal and attachment to the American cause, they should immediately enjoy all the privileges of our government, and their property (be secured to them; that it was only to stop the further effusion of innocent blood by the savages under the influence of their governor, that made them an object of our attention, etc.

No sooner had they heard this than joy sparkled in their eyes, and (they) fell into transports of joy that really surprised me. As soon as they were a little moderated, they told me that they had always been kept in the dark as to the dispute between America and Britain; that they had never heard anything before but what was prejudicial and tended to incense them against the Americans; that they were now convinced that it was a cause that they ought to espouse; that they should be happy of an opportunity to convince me of their zeal, and think themselves the happiest people in the world if they were united with the Americans, and begged that I would receive what they said as their real sentiments.

In order to be more certain of their sincerity, I told them that an oath of fidelity was required from the citizens, and to give them time to reflect on it, I should not administer it for a few days. In the meantime, any of them that chose was at liberty to leave the country with their families, except two or three particular persons; that they might repair to their families and conduct themselves as usual without any dread. The priest, Father Pierre Gibault, (who) had lately come from Canada, had made himself a little acquainted with our dispute (contrary to the principles of his brother in Canada), was rather prejudiced in favor of us. He asked if I would give him liberty to perform his duty in his church. I told him that I had nothing to do with churches more than to defend them from insult. That by the laws of the state, his religion had as great privileges as any other. This seemed to complete his happiness. They returned to their families, and, in a few minutes, the scene of mourning and distress was turned to an excess of joy---nothing else seen nor heard---adorning the streets with flowers and pavilions with different colors, completing their happiness by singing, etc.

In (the) meantime I prepared a detachment, on horseback, under Captain Bowman, to make a descent on Cohos, about sixty miles up the country. The inhabitants told me that one of their townsmen was enough to put me in possession of that place, by carrying the good news that the people would rejoice. However, I did not, altogether, choose to trust them; dispatched the captain, attended by a considerable number of the inhabitants, who got into the middle of the town before they were discovered---the French gentlemen calling aloud to the people to submit to their happier fate, which they did with very little hesitation. A number of Indians being in town, on hearing of the big knives, immediately made their escape. In a few days, the inhabitants of the country took the oath (prescribed) by law, and every person appeared to be happy. Our friends, the Spaniards, doing everything in their power to convince me of their friendship, a correspondence immediately commenced between the governor and myself.

Post St. Vincent, a town about the size of Williamsburg, was the next object in my view. As the whole was apprised of me, I was by no means able to march against it. (Their governor, a few months before going to Detroit), I was resolved, if possible, to win their affection, which I thought myself in a fair way of doing, more fully to know the sentiments of the inhabitants about there; and to execute my plans. I pretended that I was about to send an express to the falls of Ohio for a body of troops to join me at a certain place in order to attack it. It soon had the desired effect. Advocates immediately appeared among the people in their behalf. Mr. Gibault, the priest, to fully convince me of his attachment, offered to undertake to win that town for me if I would permit him, and let a few of them go. They made no doubt of gaining their friends at St. Vincent to my interest. The priest told me he would go himself, and gave me to understand

that, although he had nothing to do with temporal business, that he would give them such hints in the spiritual way that would be very conducive to the business.

In a few days the priest and Dr. Lefont, the principal, with a few others, set out, and (with) a proclamation I sent for that purpose, and other instructions, in case of success. In a few weeks they returned with intelligence agreeable to my wishes. I now found myself in possession of the whole, in a country where I found I could do more real service than I expected, which occasioned my situation to be the more disagreeable, as I wanted men.

The greater part of my men was for returning, as they were no longer engaged. Surrounded by numerous nations of savages, whose mind had been long poisoned by the English, it was with difficulty that I could support that dignity that was necessary to give my orders (the) force that was necessary, but by great presents and promises, I got about one hundred of my detachment enlisted for eight months, and to color my staying with so few troops, I made a feint of returning to the falls, as though I had sufficient confidence in the people, hoping that the inhabitants would remonstrate against my leaving them, which they did in the warmest terms, proving the necessity of the troops at that place that they were afraid if I returned the English would again possess the country. Then, seemingly by their request, I agreed to stay with two companies of troops, and that I hardly thought, as they alleged, that so many (were) necessary; but, if more (were) wanted, I could get them at any time from the falls, where, they were made to believe, was a considerable garrison.

As soon as possible, I sent off those that could not be got to stay, with Mr. Rochblave, and letters to His Excellency, letting him know my situation, and the necessity of troops in the country. Many of the French (being) fond of the service, the different companies soon got complete. I stationed Captain Bowman at Cohos; Captain Helm (in) command at St. Vincent, superintendent, etc.

Domestic affairs being partly well settled, the Indian department came next the object of my attention, and of the greatest importance. My sudden appearance in their country put them under the greatest consternation. They (were) generally at war against us, but the French and Spaniards appearing so fond of us confused them. They counseled with the French traders, to know what was best to be done, and of course was advised to come and solicit for peace, and did not doubt but we might be good friends. It may appear otherwise to you, but (I) always thought we took the wrong method of treating with Indians, and (I) strove, as soon as possible, to make myself acquainted with the French and Spanish mode, which must be preferable to ours, otherwise they could not possibly have such great influence among them. When thoroughly acquainted with it, (it) exactly coincided with my own idea, and (I) resolved to follow the same rule as near as circumstances would permit. The Kaskaskias, Peoreanas and Mechegames immediately treated for peace. I sent letters and speeches by Captain Helm to the chief of the Kickebues and Peankeshaws residing at Post St. Vincent, desiring them to lay down their tomahawk, and if they did not choose it---to behave like men and fight for the English as they had done, but they would see their Great Father, as they called him, given to the dogs to eat. (I) gave harsh language to supply the want of men, well knowing that it was a mistaken notion in many that soft speeches was best for Indians; but if they thought of giving their hands to the big knives, to give their hearts also, and that I did not doubt but, after being acquainted, that they would find that the big knives (were) of better principles than what the bad birds, the English, had taught them to believe. They received the speeches from the captain, with another of his own, and, after some consultation, they resolved to take the big knives by the hand, and came to a conclusion of peace, and said the Americans must be warriors and no deceivers, or they would never have spoken as they did; that they liked such people, and that the English (were) liars and they would listen to them no longer; that by what they had heard (from) the big knives, the Indians had as great a right to fight the English as they had; that they (were) convinced that it was truth.

What they here alluded to was part of the speech that I had sent to them, explaining to them the nature of the war in the following manner.

That a great many years ago, our forefathers lived in England, but the king oppressed them in such a manner that they were obliged to cross the great waters to get out of his way. But he, not being satisfied to lose so many subjects, sent governors and soldiers among them to make them obey his laws, but told his governors to treat them well and to take but little from them until they grew populous, that then they would be able to pay a great deal. By the good treatment we got we grew to be a great people and flourished fast. The king then wrote to his governor and officers that we had got rich and numerous enough; that it was time to make us pay tribute; that he did not care how much they took, so as they left us enough to eat, and that he had sent them a great many soldiers to make the Americans pay, if they refused; that when they had made the Americans do as they pleased, they would then make the Indians pay likewise; but for fear the Indians should find out by the big knives that the English intended to make them also pay, and should get mad with the English for their treatment of their neighbors---the big knives---that they, his governors, should make us quarrel, etc. We bore their taxes many years. At last they were so hard that if we killed a deer they would take the skin away and leave us the meat, and made us buy blankets with corn, to feed their soldiers with. By such usage, we got poor and was obliged to go naked, and at last we complained. The king got mad and made his soldiers kill some of our people, and burn some of our villages. The old men then held a great council and made the tomahawk very sharp and put it into the hands of the young men, told them to be strong and strike the English as long as they could find one on this island. They immediately struck and killed a great many of the English. The French king, hearing of it, sent to the Americans and told them to be strong and fight the English like men; that if they wanted help or tomahawks, he would furnish them, etc., etc.

This speech had a greater effect than I could have imagined, and did more service than a regiment of men could have done. It was with astonishment that (we) viewed the amazing number of savages that soon flocked into the town of Cohos to treat for peace and to hear what the big knives had to say, many of them 500 miles distant, Chipoways, Ottoways, Petawatomes, Missesogies, Puans, Sacks, Foxes, Sayges, Tauways, Maumies, and a number of other nations, all living east of the Mississippi, and many of them at war against us. I must confess that I was under some apprehension among such a number of devils, and it proved to be just, for the second or third night a party of Puans and others endeavored to force by the guards into my lodgings to bear me off, but was happily detected and made prisoners by the alacrity of the sergeant. The town took the alarm and was immediately under arms, which convinced the savages that the French were in our interest.

I was determined to follow the principle that I had set out upon, let the consequences be what it would. I immediately ordered the chiefs to be put in irons by the French militia. They insisted that it was only to see whether the French would take part with the Americans or not; that they had no ill design. This treatment of some of the greatest chiefs among them occasioned great confusion among the rest of the savages. The prisoners, with great submission, solicited to speak to me, but was refused. They then made all the interest they possibly could among the other Indians, who (were) much at a loss what to do as there was strong guards through every quarter of the town, to get to speak to me, but I told the whole that I believed they were a set of villains; that they had joined the English, and they were welcome to continue in the cause they had espoused; that I was a man and a warrior; that I did not care who (were) my friends or foes, and had no more to say to them. Such conduct alarmed the whole town, but I was sensible that it would gain us no more enemies than we had already, and, if they after solicited for terms, that it would be more sincere and probably have a lasting good effect on the Indian nations. Distrust was visible in the countenance of almost every person during the latter part of the day. To show the Indians that I disregarded them, I remained in my lodgings in the town, about one hundred yards from the fort, seemingly without a guard, but I kept about fifty men concealed in a parlor adjoining, and the garrison under arms. There was great counseling among the savages during the night. But to make them have the greater idea of my indifference about them, I assembled a number of gentlemen and ladies and danced nearly the whole night. In the morning I summoned the different nations to a grand council, and the chiefs, under guard, (were) released and invited to council that I might speak to them in the presence of the whole.

After the common ceremonies (were) over, I produced a bloody belt of wampum and spoke to them in the following manner:

I told the chiefs (who were) guilty, that I was sensible their nation was engaged in favor of the English, and, if they thought it right, I did not blame them for it, and exhorted them to behave like men and support the cause they had undertaken; that I was sensible that the English was weak and wanted help; that I scorned to take any advantage of them by persuading their friends to desert them; that there was no people but Americans but would put them to death for their late behavior; that it convinced me of their being my enemies, but it was beneath the character of Americans to take such revenge; that they were at their liberty to do as they pleased, but to behave like men, and not to do any mischief until three days after they left the town; that I should have them escorted safe out of the village, and, after that expiration of time, if they did not choose to return and fight me, they might find Americans enough by going further. That if they did not want their own women and children massacred, they must leave off killing ours and only fight men under arms, which was commendable; that there was the war belt, we should soon see which of us would make it the most bloody, etc. Then told them that it was customary among all brave men to treat their enemies well when assembled as we were; that I should give them provisions and rum while they staid, but by their behavior I could not conceive that they deserved that appellation, and I did not care how soon they left me after that day.

I observed that their countenances and attitude favored my real design---the whole looked like a parcel of criminals. The other nations rose and made many submissive speeches, excusing themselves for their conduct in a very pretty manner, and (there was) something noble in their sentiments (their talk, I enclose). They alleged that they were persuaded to war by the English and made to harbor a wrong opinion of the Americans, but they now believed them to be men and warriors and could wish to take them by the hand as brothers; that they did not speak from their lips only, but that I should hereafter find that they spoke from their hearts, and that they hoped I would pity their blindness and their women and children, and also solicited for their friends that had been guilty of the late crime.

I told them that I had instructions from the great man of the big knives not to ask peace from any people, but to offer peace and war and let them take their choice, except a few of the worst nations to whom I was to grant no peace, for, as the English could fight us no longer, he was afraid our young warriors would get rusty without they could get somebody to fight, etc. I presented them with a peace and war belt and told them to take their choice, excepting those who had been imprisoned. They, with a great deal of seeming joy, took the belt of peace. I told them I would defer smoking the peace pipe until I heard that they had called in all their warriors, and then we would conclude the treaty with all the ceremony necessary for so important (an) occasion. They immediately solicited for some persons to go with them to be witness of their conduct, and hoped that I would favor their guilty friends, which I refused; and was pleased to see them set trembling as persons frightened at the apprehension of the worst fate.

Their speaker then rose and made a most lamentable speech, such as I could have wished for---begging mercy for their women and children---for the French gentlemen, whom they put the greatest confidence in, had given them lessons that favored my purpose. I recommended it to them to go to their father, the English; as he had told them that he was strong, perhaps he might help them as he had promised; that they could blame no person but themselves when their nation should be given with the English to the dogs to eat. When they had tried their eloquence to no purpose, they pitched on two young men for to be put to death as an atonement for the rest, hoping that would pacify me. It would have surprised you to have seen how submissively those two young men presented themselves for death, advancing into the middle of the floor, sitting down by each other and covering their heads with their blankets to receive the tomahawk. Peace was what I wanted with them, if I got it on my own terms, but this stroke prejudiced me in their favor, and, for a few moments, (I) was so agitated that I don't doubt but that I should, without reflection, (have) killed the first man that would have offered to have hurt them.

My wishes respecting this treaty were now complete, and I since find no room to blame myself for any omission in what followed in the treaty, which time has already proved the good effects of it throughout the Illinois country.

Our influence now began to spread among the nations, even to the border of the lakes. I sent agents into every quarter. I continued about five weeks in the town of Cohos, in which time I had settled a peace with ten or twelve different nations.

Being much fatigued, I returned to Kaskaskia, leaving Major Bowman to act, in which he did himself much honor. An intimacy had commenced between Don Leybrau, Lieutenant-Governor of Western Illinois,\* [Don Francisco de Leyha, Spanish Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Louisiana] and myself. He omitted nothing in his power to prove his attachment to the Americans with such openness as left no room for a doubt. As I was never before in company with any Spanish gentlemen, I was much surprised in my expectations, for instead of finding that reserve thought peculiar to that nation, I here saw not the least symptoms of it; freedom, almost to excess, gave the greatest pleasure. As my return to Kaskaskia, I found everything as well as I could have expected.

Having so far fixed matters as to have a moment's leisure, which was taken up with deeper reflections than I ever before was acquainted with, my situation and weakness convinced me that more depended on my own behavior and conduct than all the troops that I had. Far removed from the body of my country, situated among French, Spaniards, and numerous bands of savages on every quarter, watching my actions, ready to receive impressions, favorable or not, of us, which might be hard to remove and would perhaps produce lasting good or ill effects---it was now that I saw my work was only begun. Maturely examining every circumstance of my past actions, fixing such resolutions, that, in case of misfortune or loss of interest, it should be for want of judgment only, strict subordination among the troops was my first object, and (I) soon effected it, it being a matter of the greatest consequence to persons in our situation, our troops being all raw and undisciplined. You must (be) sensible of the pleasure I felt when haranguing them on parade, telling them my resolutions and the necessity of strict duty for our own preservation, etc., for then to return me an answer that it was their zeal for their country that induced them to engage in the service; that they were sensible of their situation and danger; that nothing could conduce more to their safety and happiness than good order; which they would try to adhere to, and hoped that no favor would be shown those that would neglect it. In a short time, perhaps, no garrison could boast of better order, or a more valuable set of men.

By this time, the English party at Detroit, finding their influence among the savages abating, sent out messengers through the different nations as far as they dare venture; redoubled their presents and insinuations to little purpose, as I had a number of persons well acquainted with the Indians spread through the whole, that had treated with me, and spies continually in and about Detroit for a considerable time.

One of the British agents (Mons. Celeron) residing at Oueaugh (Ouiatenon), \*[ A short distance below where Lafayette, Indiana, now stands] about eighty leagues above St. Vincent, hurt our growing interest much. The Indians in that quarter being inclined to desert the British interest, but in some measure kept from their good intention by that person, I resolved, if possible, to take him off, and sent a detachment of men from Kaskaskia under the command of Lieutenant Bailey to join Captain Helm at St. Vincent, and, if possible, surprise him. The captain, with about one hundred men in number, part French militia and Indians, set out by water.

The agent, hearing of it, collected a few savages from the neighborhood that he could trust, in order to give battle (the Indians in general neutrals); but a few days before he captain's arrival Mr. Celeron thought proper to make his escape, leaving his friendly Indians in the fort, who, being assembled in a grand council to determine what was best to be done, neglecting to shut the gate or keep sentinels (not supposing the enemies to be so near), in the height of deliberation Captain Helm, Bailey and his small

party entered the fort and ordered them to surrender, before they were apprised, about forty in number being made prisoners. The captain made a valuable treaty (and) gave them their liberty. This stroke completed our interest on the Wabash.

St. Vincent being a post of great importance, and not being able to spare many men to garrison it, I took uncommon pains entirely to attach them to our interest, as well as the inhabitants of the Illinois. Knowing no other kind of government than what might be expected from the lust of power, pride and avarice of the officers commanding in that country, whose will was a law to the whole, and certain destruction to disobey the most trifling command, nothing could have been more to my advantage, as I could temper the government as I pleased, and every new privilege appeared to them as fresh laurels to the American cause.

I, by degrees, laid aside every mercenary restriction they labored under, as I was convinced that it was the mercenary views of their former governors that established them, paying no regard to the happiness of the people---and those customs strictly observed that were most conducive to good order. I made it a point to guard the happiness and tranquillity of the inhabitants, supposing that their happy change, reaching the ears of their brothers and countrymen on the lakes and about Detroit, would be paving my way to that place, and (have) a good effect on the Indians. I soon found it had the desired effect, for the greatest part of the French gentlemen and traders among the Indians declared for us. Many letters of congratulation were sent from Detroit to the gentlemen of the Illinois, which gave me much pleasure.

I let slip no opportunity in cultivating our growing interest in every quarter where there was the least appearance of a future advantage, and had as great success as I had any right to expect. Great tranquillity appeared on every countenance. Being apprehensive that the British party at Detroit, finding it hard to regain their lost interest among the savages, would probably make a descent on the Illinois, if they found themselves capitulated, for fear of their finding out our numbers (parties of men coming and going from Kentucky and other places, recruits, etc.), I suffered no parade, except the guards, for a considerable time, and took every other precaution to keep every person ignorant of our number, which was generally thought to be nearly double what we really had. I found that my ideas, respecting the movement of the English, just---having certain accounts by our spies that Governor Hamilton was on his march from Detroit with a considerable party, taking his route up the Meamies river. In a few days, receiving certain intelligence that General McIntosh had left Pittsburg for Detroit with a considerable army, knowing the weakness of the fortification of that post; at that time, their numbers, etc., I made no doubt of its being shortly in our possession, and that Governor Hamilton, sensible that there was no probability of his defending the fort, had marched with his whole force to encourage the Indians to harass the general on his march, as the only probable plan to stop him, little thinking that he had returned, and that Mr. Hamilton had the same design on me that I supposed he had at General McIntosh. It being near Christmas we feasted ourselves, with the hopes of immediately hearing from Detroit, and began to think that we had been neglected in an express not being sent with the important news of its being ours.

But a circumstance soon happened that convinced us that our hopes were vain. A young man at the town of Cohos, holding a correspondence and sending intelligence to Governor Hamilton's party, was detected and punished accordingly, by which we learned the return of General McIntosh and Governor Hamilton's intentions on the Illinois, but not so fully expressed in the latter as to reduce it to a certainty; but supposing that, in case of its being true, they would make their first descent on Kaskaskia, it being the strongest garrison and headquarters. I kept spies on all the roads to no purpose, Mr. Hamilton having the advantage of descending the Wabash, and, with eight hundred men, French, Indians and regulars, took possession of Post St. Vincent on the 17th day of December; he had parties on the road that took some of our spies. Hard weather immediately setting in, I was at a loss to know what to do. Many supposed that he had quit his design and came no further than Ome, \*[Omee a corruption of Aux Miamis, an Indian Village at the confluence of the St. Joseph and St. Mary rivers, on the site of the present city of Fort Wayne, Indiana] but no intelligence from St. Vincent, I was still under some doubt of his being there,

except that the commander had kept back the express on account of the high waters. In this situation we remained for many days. I intended to evacuate the garrison of Cohos in case of a siege, but was anxious to have a conference with the principal inhabitants that I knew to be zealous in our interest, to fix on certain plans for their conduct when in possession of the English, if it should be the case, and set out on the ---- day of January, 1779, for that town, with an intention of staying but a few days. Mr. Hamilton, in meantime, had sent a party of forty savages, headed by white men from St. Vincent, in order if possible, to take me prisoner, and gave such instructions for my treatment as did him no dishonor.

This party lay concealed, keeping a small party near the road to see who passed. They lay by a small branch about three miles from Kaskaskia---there being snow on the ground. I had a guard of about six or seven men, and a few gentlemen in chairs, one of them swamped within one hundred yards of the place where these fellows lay hid, where we had to delay upwards of an hour. I believe nothing here saved me but the instructions they had not to kill, or the fear of being overpowered, not having an opportunity to alarm the main body, which lay half a mile off, without being discovered themselves. We arrived save at the town of La Prairie du Rocher, [An old French village in Randolph county, on the American bottom near the rocky bluffs, from which it derives its name, fourteen miles northwest of Kaskaskia] about twelve miles above Kaskaskia. The gentlemen and ladies immediately assembled at a ball for our entertainment. We spent the fore part of the night very agreeably, but about 12 o'clock there was a very sudden change by an express arriving informing us that Governor Hamilton was within three miles of Kaskaskia with eight hundred men, and was determined to attack the fort that night, which was expected would be before the express got to me, for, it seems, that those fellows were discovered by a hunter, and after missing their aim on me, discovered themselves to a party of negroes and told them (such) a story as suited their purpose. I never saw greater confusion among a small assembly than was that time, every person having their eyes on me as if my word was to determine their good or evil fate. It required but a moment's hesitation in me to form my resolutions; communicated them to two of my officers who accompanied me, which they approved of. I ordered our horses saddled in order, if possible, to get into the fort before the attack could be made. Those of the company who had recovered their surprise, so far as to enable them to speak, begged of me not to attempt to return; that the town was certainly in possession of the enemy, and the fort warmly attacked. Some proposed conveying me to the Spanish shore, some one thing and some another. I thanked them for the care they had of my person, and told them it was the fate of war; that a good soldier never ought to be afraid of his life where there was a probability of his doing service by venturing of it, which was my case; that I hoped that they would not let the news spoil our diversion sooner than was necessary; that we divert ourselves until our horses were ready; forced them to dance and endeavored to appear as unconcerned as if no such thing was in agitation. This conduct inspired the young men in such a manner that many of them were getting their horses to share fate with me. But, choosing to lose no time, as soon as I could write a few lines on the back of my letter to Captain Bowman, at Cohos, I set out for Kaskaskia. Each man (took) a blanket that in case the fort was attacked, we were to wrap ourselves in them, fall in with the enemy, fire at the fort until we had an opportunity of getting so near as to give the proper signals, knowing that we would be let in.

But on our arrival we found everything as calm as we could expect. The weather being bad, it was then thought the attack would not commence until it cleared up. But no person seemed to doubt of the enemy being at hand, and from many circumstances I could not but suppose it was the case; that they deferred the attack for some time in order to give us time to retreat, which I supposed they would rather choose by their proceedings. But I was determined that they should be disappointed, if that was their wish. There was no time lost during the night putting everything in as good order as possible. The priest, of all men, (was) the most afraid of Mr. Hamilton. He was in the greatest consternation, (but) determined to act agreeable to my instruction. I found, by his consternation, that he was sure the fort would be taken, except reinforced by the garrison at Cohos, which I did not choose to let him know would be the case; although I knew him to be a zealous friend. I pretended that I wanted him to go to the Spanish side with public papers and money. The proposition pleased him well. He immediately started, and, getting (on) an island, the ice passing so thick down the Mississippi that he was obliged to encamp three days in the most obscure part of the island, with only a servant to attend him.

I spent many serious reflections during the night. The inhabitants had always appeared to be attached to us, but I was convinced that I should, in the morning, have a sufficient trial of their fidelity (several of their young men had turned into the fort in order to defend it), but sensible, at the same time, that, in case they took arms to defend the town, the whole would probably be lost, as I should be obliged to give the enemy battle in the commons. I would have chosen to have had those without families to reinforce the garrison, and the rest to have lain neuter.

I resolved to burn part of the town that was near the fort and guard it, as I knew the greatest service we possibly could do was to sell the fort as dear as possible, there being no probability of escaping after attack, or expectation of reinforcements, as we were too far detached from the body of our country. The only possible chance of safety was Captain Bowman's joining me, which I expected the next evening down the Mississippi, to defend ourselves until Mr. Hamilton's Indians got tired and returned in four or five weeks, which I expected the greatest part would do if they had not that success that they expected. I had no occasion to consult the garrison in any resolution I should fix upon, as I knew they were all as spirited as I could wish them to be, and took pains to make them as desperate as possible. If you rightly consider our situation and circumstance, you must conceive it to be desperate. In the morning the first thing I did was to assemble all the inhabitants in order to know their resolutions. As they had been the night counseling with each other, they expected some orders issued, which I did not choose to do. At the assembly I asked them what they thought of doing--whether they would endeavor to defend the town or not; if they did, I would quit the fort, leaving a small guard, and head them with the troops; and if the enemy lay until the weather broke, we might, probably, in the meantime, discover their camp and get some advantage of them. They appeared to be in great confusion, and all my fear was that they would agree to defend themselves, and if the enemy was as numerous as was expected, the whole would be lost. But I need not to have been uneasy about that, for they had too maturely studied their own interest to think of fighting, which they certainly would have done if I had only as many troops as would have given any probability of success. They displayed their situation in such a manner as was really moving, and with great truth, but denied to act, either on one side or the other, and begged that I would believe them to be in the American interest. But my whole force, joined with them, would make but a poor figure against so considerable a party, and gave hints that they could with us take Spanish protection, as they could not conceive we could keep possession a single day, as the enemy would immediately set the adjacent houses on fire, which would fire the fort--not knowing that I intended to burn them myself as soon as the wind shifted. I very seldom found but I could govern my temper at pleasure, but this declaration of theirs, and some other circumstances, put me in the most violent rage, and as soon as I could curb my passion gave a lecture suitable for a set of traitors--although I could not conceive the whole of them to be such. I ordered them out of the garrison, and told them that I no longer thought they deserved favor from me; that I consequently must conceive them to be my secret enemies, and should treat them as such. They endeavored to soothe me into pity, but to have listened to them would have destroyed my intention. I determined to make myself appear to them as desperate as possible, that it might have a greater effect on the enemy. They asked me to issue an order for all the provisions, in the town to be brought into the fort immediately, by which I was convinced that it was their desire that I should be able to stand the siege as long as possible, and only wanted an excuse to the person they expected every moment to be their master for making the supplies. I told them that I would have all the provisions, and then burn the town to the enemy's hand; that they might send the provisions, if they chose it, and sent them out of the fort; and immediately had fire set to some outhouses. Never was a set of people in more distress. Their town set on fire by those they wished to be in friendship with, at the same time surrounded by the savages, as they expected, from whom they had but little else but destruction to expect. The houses being covered with snow, the fire had no effect only on those it was set to--the inhabitants looking on without daring to say a word. I told them that I intended to set fire to all those that had much provisions, for fear of the enemy's getting it. They were not in so great lethargy but they took the hint, and before night they brought in six months' provisions of all sorts, by which they were in hopes to come on better terms.

But a fresh circumstance alarmed them. One of the inhabitants, riding into the field, met a man who told him he saw a party of the enemy going on the island to take the priest; he, returning to town, met the priest's brother-in-law, and told him what he had heard, and begged of him not to tell me of it. The poor fellow, half scared to death about his brother, made all haste and told me. I took his evidence, sent for the citizen, who could not deny it. I immediately ordered him hanged. The town took the alarm, hastened about the walls of the fort, if possible to save their friend. The poor fellow (was) given up to the soldiers, who dragged him to the place of execution, each striving to be foremost in the execution, as if they thirsted after blood. Some were for tomahawking him, some for hanging, and other for burning; they got to quarreling about it, which at last saved his life, the inhabitants having time to supplicate in his favor; but nothing would have saved his life but the appearance of his wife and seven small children, which sight was too moving not to have granted them the life of their parent, on terms that put it out of his power to do any damage to me.

The weather clearing away, Captain Bowman arrived the following day with his own and a company of volunteers from Cohos. We now began to make a tolerable appearance and seemed to defy the enemy, and sent out spies on every quarter to make discovery of them, hoping we might get some advantage of them, choosing, for many important reasons, to attack them two to one in the field rather than suffer them to take possession of the town, which, by the form and manner of picketing the yards and gardens, was very strong. I was convinced that the inhabitants now wished they had behaved in another manner. I took the advantage of the favorable opportunity to attach them entirely in my interest, and instead of treating them more severe, as they expected on my being reinforced, I altered my conduct towards them and treated them with the greatest kindness, granting them every request. My influence among them, in a few hours, was greater then ever, they condemning themselves and thought that I had treated them as they deserved. And I believe had Mr. Hamilton appeared, we should have defeated him with a good deal of ease---not so numerous, but the men being much better. Our spies returning, and found the great army that gave the alarm consisted of only about forty whites and Indians, making their retreat as fast as possible to St. Vincent, sent for no other purpose, as we found after, than to take me.

We were now sensible that St. Vincent was in possession of the English, and, consequently, we might shortly expect an attack, though no danger at present, and had some time to make preparation for what we were certain of. I had reason to expect a reinforcement on the presumption that government ordered one on the receipt of my first letter. Still encouraged each other and hoped for the best, but suffered more uneasiness than when I was certain of an immediate attack, as I had more time to reflect, the results of which was that the Illinois in a few months would be in possession of the English, except the garrison which I knew would not be disposed to surrender without the greatest distress.

I sent off horsemen to St. Vincent to take a prisoner by which we might get intelligence, but found it impracticable on account of the high waters; but in the height of our anxiety, on the evening of the 29th of January, 1779, Mr. Vigo, a Spanish merchant, arrived from St. Vincent, and was there the time of its being taken, and gave me every intelligence that I could wish to have. Governor Hamilton's party consisted of about eight hundred when he took possession of that post on the 17th day of December past. Finding the season too far spent for his intention against Kaskaskia, had sent nearly the whole of his Indians out in different parties to war, but to embody as soon as the weather would permit and complete his design. He had also sent messengers to the southern Indians, five hundred of whom he expected to join him. Only eighty troops in garrison, our situation still appeared desperate. It was at this moment I would have bound myself seven years a slave to have had five hundred troops. I saw the only probability of our maintaining the country was to take the advantage of his present weakness. Perhaps we might be fortunate. I considered the inclemency of the season, the badness of the roads, etc., as an advantage to us, as they would be more off their guard on all quarters. I collected the officers, told them the probability I thought there was of turning the scale in our favor. I found it the sentiment of every one of them and eager for it. Our plans immediately concluded on and sent an express to Cohos for the return of Captain McCarty and his volunteers, and set about the necessary preparations in order to transport my artillery, stores, etc.

I had a large boat prepared and rigged, mounting two four-pounders, four large swivels, manned with a fine company commanded by Lieutenant Rogers. She set out in the evening of the 4th of January, (February) with orders to force her way, if possible, within ten leagues of St. Vincent, and lay until further orders. This vessel, when complete, was much admired by the inhabitants, as no such thing had been seen in the country before. I had great expectations from her. I conducted myself as though I was sure of taking Mr. Hamilton, instructed my officers to observe the same rule. In a day or two the country seemed to believe it, many, anxious to retrieve their characters, turned out. The ladies began, also, to be spirited, and interest themselves in the expedition, which had great effect on the young men.

By the 4th day of January (February), \*[It was the 4th day of February, 1779.] I got everything complete, and on the fifth I marched, being joined by two volunteer companies of the principal young men of the Illinois, commanded by Captains McCarty and Francis Charlaville. Those of the troops were Captains Bowman and William Worthington of the light horse. [No such name as William Worthington is found on the roll of persons receiving land in Clark's grant, but the name of Captain Edward Worthington is found there.] We were conducted out of the town by the inhabitants and Mr. Gibault, the priest, who, after a very suitable discourse to the purpose, gave us all absolution, and we set out on a forlorn hope indeed, for our whole party, with the boat's crew, consisted of only a little upwards of two hundred. I can not account for it, but I still had inward assurance of success, and never could, when weighing every circumstance, doubt it but I had some secret check.

We had now a route before us of two hundred and forty miles in length, through, I suppose, one of the most beautiful countries in the world, but at this time, in many parts, flowing with water, and exceeding bad marching. My greatest care was to divert the men as much as possible, in order to keep up their spirits. The first obstruction of any consequence that I met with was on the 13th. Arriving at the two Little Wabashes, although three miles asunder---they now make but one---the flowed water between them being at least three feet deep and in many places four. Being near five miles to the opposite hills, the shallowest place, except about one hundred yards, was three feet. This would have been enough to have stopped any set of men not in the same temper that we were. But in three days we contrived to cross by building a large canoe, ferried across the two channels; the rest of the way we waded, building scaffolds at each to lodge our baggage on until the horses crossed to take them. It rained nearly a third of the our march, but we never halted for it. In the evening of the 17th we got to the low lands of the river Embarrass,\* [The Embarrass river enters the Wabash on the west, a little below Vincennes; course, southeast.] which we found deep in water, it being nine miles to St. Vincennes, which stood on the east side of the Wabash, and every foot of the way covered with deep water. We marched down the little river in order to gain the banks of the main, which we did in about three leagues, made a small canoe and sent an express to meet the boat and hurry it up. From the spot we now lay on, (it) was about ten miles to town (Vincennes), and every foot of the way put together, that was not under three feet and upwards under water, would not have made the length of two miles and half, and not a mouthful of provisions. To have waited for our boat, if possible to avoid it, would have been impolitic. If I was sensible that you would let no person see this relation, I would give you a detail of our suffering for four days in crossing those waters and the manner it was done, as I am sure that you would credit it, but it is too incredible for any person to believe, except those who are as well acquainted with me as you are, or had experienced something similar to it. I hope you will excuse me until I have the pleasure of seeing you personally. But to our inexpressible joy, in the evening of the 23d, we got safe on terra firma within half a league of the fort, covered by a small grove of trees, had a full view of the wished for spot. I should have crossed at a greater distance from the town, but the White river coming in just below us, we were afraid of getting too near it. We had already taken some prisoners that were coming from the town. Lying in the grove some time, to dry out clothes, by the sun, we took another prisoner, known to be a friend, by which we got all the intelligence we wished for, but would not suffer him to see our troops, except a few.

A thousand ideas flashed in my head at this moment. I found that Governor Hamilton was able to defend himself for a considerable time, but knew that he was not able to turn out of the fort; that if the siege

continued long a superior number might come against us, as I knew there was a party of English not far above in the river; that if they found out our numbers (they) might raise the disaffected savages and harass us. I resolved to appear as daring as possible, that the enemy might conceive, by our behavior, that we were very numerous, and probably discourage them. I immediately wrote to the inhabitants in general, informing them where I was, and what I determined to do; desiring the friends to the states to keep close to their houses, and those in the British interest to repair to the fort and fight for their king, otherways there should be no mercy shown them, etc., etc. Sending the compliments of several officers that were known to be expected to reinforce me to several gentlemen of the town, I dispatched the prisoner off with this letter, waiting until near sunset, giving him time to get near the town before we marched. As it was an open plain from the wood that covered us, I marched time enough to be seen from the town before dark, but, taking advantage of the land, disposed the lines in such a manner that nothing but the pavilions could be seen, having as many of them as would be sufficient for a thousand men, which was observed by the inhabitants who had just received my letter, counted the different colors, and judged of our number accordingly. But I was careful to give them no opportunity of seeing our troops before dark, which it would be before we could arrive. The houses obstructed the fort's observing us, and were not alarmed, as I expected, by many of the inhabitants.

I detached Lieutenant Bailey and a party to attack the fort at a certain signal, and took possession of the strongest posts of the town with the main body. The garrison had so little suspicion of what was to happen that they did not believe the firing was from an enemy, until a man was wounded through the ports (which happened the third or fourth shot), expecting it to be some drunken Indians. The firing commenced on both sides very warm; a second division joined the first. A considerable number of British Indians made their escape out of town. The Kickepous and Peankeshaws, to the amount of about one hundred, that were in town, immediately armed themselves in our favor and marched to attack the fort. I thanked the chief for his intended service, told him the ill consequence of our people being mingled in the dark,---that they might lay in their quarters until light. He approved of it and sent off his troops, appeared to be much elevated himself, and staid with me, giving all the information he could. I knew him to be a friend. The artillery from the fort played briskly but did no execution. The garrison was entirely surrounded within eighty and a hundred yards behind houses, palings, and ditches, etc., etc. Never was a heavier firing kept up on both sides for eighteen hours, with so little damage done.

In a few hours I found my prize sure, certain of taking every man that I could have wished for, being the whole of those that incited the Indians to war. All my past sufferings vanished; never was a man more happy. It wanted no encouragement from any officer to inflame our troops with a martial spirit. The knowledge of the person they attacked, and the thoughts of their massacred friends, was sufficient. I knew that I could not afford to lose men, and took the greatest care of them that I possibly could--- at the same time encouraged them to be daring but prudent. Every place near the fort that could cover them was crowded, and a very heavy firing during the night, having flung up a considerable intrenchment before the gate, where I intended to plant my artillery when arrived.

I had learned that one Masonville had arrived that evening with two prisoners taken on the Ohio, discovering some sign of us, supposed (us) to be spies from Kentucky. Immediately on his arrival Captain Lamothe (was) sent out to intercept them; being out on our arrival, could not gain the fort; in attempting, several of his men were made prisoners. Himself and party hovering round the town, I was convinced that they would make off to the Indians at daybreak if they could not join their friends. Finding all endeavors fruitless to take him, I withdrew the troops a little from the garrison in order to give him an opportunity to get in, which he did, much to his credit and my satisfaction, as I would rather it should receive that reinforcement than they should be at large among the savages.

The firing again commenced. A number of the inhabitants joined the troops and behaved exceedingly well in general. Knowing of the prisoners lately taken, and by the description I had of them, I was sure of their being the express from Williamsburg, but was mistaken. To save the papers and letters, about 8 o'clock in the morning, I ordered the firing to cease and sent a flag into the garrison with a hand-bill,

recommended Mr. Hamilton to surrender his garrison, and severe threats if he destroyed any letters, etc. He returned an answer to this purpose: That the garrison was not disposed to be awed into anything unbecoming British soldiers. The attack was renewed with greater vigor than ever, and continued for about two hours.

I was determined to listen to no terms whatever until I was in possession of the fort, and only meant to keep them in action with part of my troops while I was making necessary preparations with the other. (I) neglected calling on any of the inhabitants for assistance, although they wished for it. A flag appeared from the fort with a proposition from Mr. Hamilton for three days' cessation, (with) a desire of a conference with me immediately; that if I should make any difficulty of coming into the fort, he would meet me at the gate. I, at first, had no notion of listening to anything he had to say, as I could only consider himself and officers as murderers, and intended to treat them as such, but, after some deliberation, I sent Mr. Hamilton my compliments and begged leave to inform him that I should agree to no other terms than his surrendering himself and garrison prisoners at discretion, but if he was desirous of a conference with me I would meet him at the church. We accordingly met. He offered to surrender, but we could not agree upon terms. He received such treatment on this conference as a man of his known barbarity deserved. I would not come upon terms with him, and recommended him to defend himself with spirit and bravery; that it was the only thing that would induce me to treat him and his garrison with lenity, in case I stormed it, which he might expect. He asked me what more I could require than the offers he had already made. I told him, which was really the truth, that I wanted a sufficient excuse to put all the Indians and partisans to death, as the greatest part of those villains was then with him. All his propositions were refused. He asked me if nothing would do but fighting, I knew of nothing else. He then begged me to stay until he should return to the garrison and consult his officers. Being indifferent about him, and wanting a few moments for my troops to refresh themselves, I told him that the firing should not commence until such an hour; that during that time he was at liberty to pass with safety.

Some time before, a party of warriors, sent by Mr. Hamilton against Kentucky, (who) had taken two prisoners, was discovered by the Kickebues, who gave information of them. A party was immediately detached to meet them, which happened in the commons; they conceived our troops to be a party sent by Mr. Hamilton to conduct them in, an honor commonly paid them. I was highly pleased to see each party whooping, hallooing and striking each other's breasts as they approached in the open fields; each seemed to try to outdo the other in the greatest signs of joy. The poor devils never discovered their mistake until too late for many of them to escape. Six of them were made prisoners, two of them scalped, and the rest so wounded, as we afterwards learned, (that) but one lived. I had now as fair opportunity of making an impression on the Indians as I could have wished for--that of convincing them that Governor Hamilton could not give them that protection that he had made them to believe he could; and, in some measure to incense the Indians against him for not exerting himself to save (their) friends, ordered the prisoners to be tomahawked in the face of the garrison. It had the effect that I expected. Instead of making their friends inveterate against us, they upbraided the English parties in not trying to save their friends, and gave them to understand that they believed them to be liars, and no warriors.

A remarkable circumstance happened that I think worthy our notice: An old French gentleman, of the name of St. Crois, lieutenant of Captain McCarty's Volunteers from Cohos, had but one son, who headed these Indians and was made prisoner. The question was put whether the white man should be saved. I ordered them to put him to death, through indignation, which did not extend to the savages. For fear he would make his escape, his father drew his sword and stood by him in order to run him through in case he should stir; being painted (he) could not know him. The wretch, on seeing the executioner's tomahawk raised to give the fatal stroke, raised his eyes as if making his last addresses to heaven, cried "O, save me!" The father knew the son's voice. You may easily guess of the agitation and behavior of these two persons, coming to the knowledge of each other at so critical a moment. I had so little mercy for such murderers, and so valuable an opportunity for an example, knowing there would be the greatest solicitation made to save him, that I immediately absconded myself; but by the warmest entreaties from

his father, who had behaved so exceedingly well in our service, and some of the officers. I granted his life on certain conditions.

Mr. Hamilton and myself again met. He produced certain articles which were refused, but towards the close of the evening I sent him the following articles:

1. That Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton engages to deliver up to Colonel Clark Fort Sackville, as it is at present, with all the stores, etc.
2. The garrison are to deliver themselves up as prisoners of war, and march out with their arms and accoutrements, etc., etc.
3. The garrison to be delivered up to-morrow at then o'clock.
4. Three days' time be allowed the garrison to settle their accounts with the traders and inhabitants of this place.
5. The officers of the garrison to be allowed their necessary baggage, etc., etc.

Which was agreed to and fulfilled the next day. Knowing that Governor Hamilton had sent a party of men up the Ouabach (Wabash) to Ome (Miami Town) for stores that he had left there, which must be on their return, I waited about twelve hours for the arrival of the galley to intercept them, but, fearing their getting intelligence, dispatched Captain Helm with a party in armed boats who suppressed and made prisoners of forty, among which was Dejeane, grand judge of Detroit, with a large packet from Detroit and seven boats' load of provisions, Indian goods, etc.

Never was a person more mortified than I was at this time to see so fair opportunity to push a victory---Detroit lost for want of a few men, knowing that they would immediately make great preparations expecting me. The galley had taken upon her passage the express from Williamsburg with letters from His Excellency. Having at once all the intelligence I could wish for, from both sides, I was better able to fix my future plans of operation against Detroit. By His Excellency's letter, I might expect to have a complete battalion in a few months. The militia of Illinois I knew would turn out, did not doubt of getting two or three hundred men from Kentucky, consequently put the matter out of doubt.

I contented myself on that presumption, having almost as many prisoners as I had men. Seeing the necessity of getting rid of many of the prisoners, not being able to guard them, not doubting but my good treatment to the volunteers and inhabitants of Detroit would promote my interests there, I discharged the greatest part of them that had not been with Indian parties, on their taking the oath of neutrality. They went off huzzaing for the congress, and declared though they could not fight against the Americans they would for them. As I after this had spies constant to and from Detroit, I learned they answered every purpose that I could have wished for, by prejudicing their friends in favor of America.

So certain were the inhabitants of that post of my marching against it, that they made provisions for me in defiance of the garrison. Many of them paid dear for it since.

I dispatched off Captain Williams and company with Governor Hamilton, his principal officers and a few soldiers, to the falls of Ohio, to be sent to Williamsburg, and, in a few days, sent my letters to the governor.

Having matters a little settled, the Indian department became my next object. I knew that Mr. Hamilton had endeavored to make them believe that we intended at last to take all their lands from them, and that in case of success, we should show no greater mercy for those who did not join him than those who did. I endeavored to make myself acquainted (with) the arguments he used, and calling together the

neighboring nations---Peankeshaws, Kickepoes, and others that would not listen to him---endeavored to undeceive them. I made a very long speech to them in the Indian manner; extolled them to the skies for their manly behavior and fidelity; told them that we were so far from having any design on their lands that I looked upon it that we were then on their land where the fort stood; that we claimed no land in their country; that the first man that offered to take their lands by violence must strike the tomahawk in my head; that it was only necessary that I should be in their country during the war and keep a fort in it to drive off the English, who had a design against all people; after that I might go to some place where I could get land to support me. The treaty was concluded to the satisfaction of both parties. They were much pleased at what they heard, and begged me to favor them the next day with my company at a council of theirs. I accordingly attended---greatest part of the time spent in ceremony. They at last told me that they had been meditating on what I had said the day before; that all the nations would be rejoiced to have me always in their country as their great father and protector, and as I had said I would claim no land in their country, they were determined that they would not lose me on that account and resolved to give me a piece, but larger than they had given to all the French at the village, and laying down what they would wish me to do, etc. I was well pleased at their offer as I had then an opportunity to deny the acceptance and further convince them that we did not want their land. They appeared dejected at my refusal.

I waived the discourse upon other subjects---recommended a frolic to them that night, as the sky was clearer than ever, gave to them a quantity of taffy\* [Clark meant taffia, a popular liquor of that day.] and provisions to make merry on, and left them. In a few days some Chipoways and others, who had been with Mr. Hamilton, came in and begged me to excuse their blindness and take them into favor. After the warmest solicitations for mercy, I told them that the big knives were merciful, which proved them to be warriors; that I should send belts and a speech to all the nations; that they, after hearing of it, might do as they pleased, but must blame themselves for future misfortunes, and dispatched them. Nothing destroys your interest among the savages so soon as wavering sentiments or speeches that show the least fear. I consequently had observed one steady line of conduct among them. Mr. Hamilton, who was almost deified among them, being captured by me, it was a sufficient confirmation to the Indians of everything I had formerly said to them, and gave the greatest weight to the speeches I intended to send them---expecting that I should shortly be able to fulfill my threats with a body of troops sufficient to penetrate into any part of their country---and by reducing Detroit bring them to my feet. I sent the following speech to the different tribes near the lakes that were at war with us, to wit:

To the Warriors of the Different Nations:

MEN AND WARRIORS---It is a long time since the big knives sent belts of peace among you, soliciting of you not to listen to the bad talk and deceit of the English, as it would, at some future day, tend to the destruction of your nations. You would not listen, but joined the English against the big knives and spilled much blood of women and children. The big knives then resolved to show no mercy to any people that hereafter would refuse the belt of peace which should be offered, at the same time one of war. You remember last summer a great many people took me by the hand, but a few kept back their hearts. I also sent belts of peace and war among the nations to take their choice; some took the peace belt, others listened to their great father (as they call him) at Detroit, and joined him to come to war against me. The big knives are warriors, and look on the English as old women, and all those that join him, and are ashamed when they fight them because they are no men.

I now send two belts to all the nations, one for peace and the other for war. The one that is for war has your great English father's scalp tied to it; and made red with his blood. All you that call yourselves his children, make your hatchets sharp, and come out and revenge his blood on the big knives; fight like men, that the big knives may not be ashamed when they fight you---that the old women may not tell us that we only fought squaws. If any of you are for taking the belt of peace, send the bloody belt back to me, that I may know who to take by the hand as brothers, for you may be assured that no peace, for the future, will be granted to those that do not lay down their arms immediately. It's as you will. I don't care

whether you are for peace or war, as I glory in war and want enemies to fight us, as the English can't fight us any longer, and are become like young children, begging the big knives for mercy and a little bread to eat. This is the last speech you may ever expect from the big knives; the next thing will be the tomahawk. And you may expect, in four moons, to see your women and children given to the dogs to eat, while those nations that have kept their words with me will flourish and grow like the willow trees on the river banks, under the care and nourishment of their father, the big knives.

In a few weeks great numbers came in to St. Vincent and treated for peace, being laughed at by those that had strictly adhered to their former treaty with me. After fixing every department so as to promise future advantage---sending letters to (the) county lieutenant of Kentucky, soliciting him to make some preparatory strokes towards joining me, when called on, with all his force he could raise, leaving a sufficient garrison---on the 20th of March I set out for Kaskaskia, by water, with a guard of eighty men, spending much time in making some observation at different places; consequently, arrived too late to have hindered a war that commenced between a few Delawares residing in this part of the world and the inhabitants. A few of them that had joined the British party, knowing what had happened, went to Kaskaskia, as was supposed, to compromise matters, but getting drunk with some loose young fellows, gave some threats on each side. One of the Indians snapping a gun at a woman's breast, two of them were immediately killed; the rest, pursued by the townsmen some distance down the river, one killed and some others wounded. The war was carried on pretty equal, on both sides, for several months, but they at last thought proper to solicit a peace. During my absence, Captain Robert George, commanding the company formerly Captain Willing's, had arrived from Orleans, taking charge of the garrison, which was a considerable reinforcement to our little party. Everything having the appearance of tranquillity, I resolved to spend a few weeks in diversions, which I had not done since my arrival in the Illinois, but found it impossible when I had any matter of importance in view. The reduction of Detroit was always uppermost in my mind, not from a motive of applause, but from the desire I had of establishing a profound peace on our frontiers. Being so well acquainted with its situation, strength and influence, that, in case I was not disappointed in the number of troops I expected, I even accounted Detroit my own.

Receiving letters from Colonel (John) Bowman, at Kentucky, informing me that I might expect him to reinforce me with three hundred men whenever I should call on him, if it lay in his power, at the same time receiving intelligence from Colonel Montgomery, I now thought my success reduced to a certainty, (and) immediately set about making provision for the expedition, to be ready against the arrival of troops, to give the enemy as little time as possible to complete the new fortifications I knew they were about.

I sent an express to Colonel Bowman, desiring him to join me on the 20th of June at St. Vincent with all the force he possibly could raise, agreeable to his letters to me; sent out Captain-----[name illegible in the manuscript] among the different nations of Indians to receive their congratulations on our late success, receive the submission of those who resolved to desert the English, etc., as well as to get fresh intelligence from Detroit.

The civil department in the Illinois had heretofore robbed me of too much of my time that ought to be spent in military reflection. I was now likely to be relieved by Colonel John Todd, appointed by government for that purpose. I was anxious for his arrival, and happy in his appointment, as the greatest intimacy and friendship subsisted between us, and on the---day of May had the pleasure of seeing him safely landed at Kaskaskia, to the joy of every person. I now saw my self rapidly rid of a piece of trouble that I had no delight in.

In a few days Colonel Montgomery arrived. To my mortification, found that he had not half the men I expected, (but) immediately receiving a letter from Colonel Bowman, with fresh assurances of a considerable reinforcement, (and) the officers in general being anxious for the expedition, resolved to rendezvous according to appointment, and, if not deceived by the Kentuckians, I should still be able to complete my design, as I only wanted men sufficient to make me appear respectable in passing through the savages, by which means I could, on the march, command those friendly at my ease, and defy my

enemies. Three hundred men being at this time sufficient to reduce the garrison at Detroit, as the new works were not complete, nor could not be, according to the plan, before my arrival. The gentlemen of Detroit not being idle (having sufficient reason to be convinced that they were in no danger from the department of Pittsburg, always suspicious of my attacking them, sensible of my growing interest among the savages, in order to give themselves more time to fortify by making some diversion on the Illinois), engaged a considerable number of their savages to make an attempt on St. Vincent. Those Indians who had declared for the American interest, in order to show their zeal, sent word to them that if they had a mind to fight the Bostonians at St. Vincent, they must first cut their way through them, as they were big knives too. This effectually stopped their operation. Knowing that the expedition depended entirely on the Kentuckians turning out, I began to be suspicious of a disappointment on hearing of their marching against the Shawnee towns, which proved too true, for, on my arrival at St. Vincent, the first of July, instead of two or three hundred men that I was promised, I found only about thirty volunteers; meeting with a repulse from the Shawnees, got discouraged, consequently not in the power of the commander to march them as militia. Being for some time (as I hinted below) suspicious of a disappointment I had conducted matters so as to make no ill impression on the minds of the savages, in case I should not proceed, as the whole had suspected that my design was against Detroit. Several nations solicited me to go, and suffer them to join me. Various were the conjectures respecting the propriety of the attempt with the troops we had---about three hundred and fifty. At a council of war, held for the purpose, there were only two casting voices against it, and I pretended it was on account of General Sullivan's marching on Niagara, which we just heard, that stopped us; that there was no doubt of his success---Detroit will fall, of course, and consequently was not worth our while marching against it; although I knew at the same time Detroit would not fall with Niagara, as they had an early communication with Montreal, through another channel, by way of the Grand river.

A number of Indians visited me at this time, renewing the chain of friendship, etc., to all of whom I gave general satisfaction, except that of my refusal of a tract of land that their chief had formerly offered me. I inquired of several gentlemen acquainted with them why they were solicitous about it. Their opinion was that the Indians, being exceedingly jealous of their lands being taken without their consent, being told by the English that I had a design on their country, by my accepting a tract from them as a present would prove sufficiently to them that what they had been told was false. Being satisfied in this, they also had a desire of my remaining in their country as their chief and guardian, and that my refusal had given them suspicion. In order to remove it I made a suitable speech to them, which gave general satisfaction, and in a few days they, with a great deal of ceremony, presented me the following deed of gift:

By the Tobacco's Son, Grand Chief of all the Peankeshaw nations and all of the tribes; grand door to the Ouabache as ordered by the Master of Life, holding the tomahawk in one hand and peace in the other, judging the nations, giving entrance for those that are for peace and making then a clear road, etc.

#### DECLARATION.

Where as, for many years past this once peaceable land hath been put in confusion by the English encouraging all people to raise the tomahawk against the big knives, saying that they were a bad people, rebellious, and ought to be put from under the sun, and their names to be no more.

But as the sky of our councils was always misty and never clear, we still were at a loss to know what to do, hoping that the Master of Life would, one day or other, make the sky clear and put us in the right road. He, taking pity on us, sent a father among us (Colonel George Rogers Clark), who has cleared our eyes and made our paths straight, defending our lands, etc., so that we now enjoy peace from the rising to the setting of sun, and the nations even to the heads of the great river (meaning the Mississippi), are happy and will no more listen to bad birds, but abide by the councils of their great father, a chief of the big knives that is now among us.

And, whereas, it is our desire that he should long remain among us that we may take his counsel and be happy; it being also our desire to give him lands to reside on in our country, that we may at all times

speak to him, after many solicitations to him to make a choice of a tract, he choosing the lands adjoining the falls of Ohio, on the west side of said river.

I do hereby, in the name of all the great chiefs and warriors of the Wabash and their allies, declare that so much land at the falls of Ohio, contained in the following bounds, to wit: Beginning opposite the middle of the first island below the falls, bounded upwards by the west bank of the river so far as to include two leagues and a half on a straight line from the beginning; thence at right angles with said line two leagues and a half in breadth, in all its parts, shall hereafter and ever be the sole property of our great father (Colonel Clark), with all things thereto belonging, either above or below the earth, shall be and is his, except a road through said land to his door, which shall remain ours, and for us to walk on to speak to our father. All nations from the rising to the setting of the sun, who are not in alliance with us, are hereby warned to esteem the said gift as sacred and not to make that land taste of blood; that all people either at peace or war may repair in safety to get counsel of our father. Whoever first darkens that land shall no longer have a name. This declaration shall forever be a witness between all nations and our present great father; that the said lands are forever hereafter his property.

In witness whereof, I do, in the name of all the great chiefs and warriors of the Wabash, in open council, affix my mark and seal done at St. Vincent, this 16th day of June, 1779.

(Signed) FRANCIS, SON OF TOBACCO

Which deed I accepted, and endeavored to convince them how much I prized so liberal a gift, etc. As I had no idea of having property in the lands myself, knowing the laws of my country justly against it, I chose it at the falls of Ohio, suspecting that I might hereafter find it necessary to fortify that place for the convenience of free intercourse. Having a number of supernumerary officers, I sent them into the settlement recruiting, finding the interest of the department required me to spend a few months at the falls of Ohio---being also induced with the hopes of giving the Shawnees a drubbing in case a sufficient force could be again raised at Kentucky. After giving proper instruction for the direction of the commanders of the different posts, I set out for the falls, where I arrived safe on the 20th day of August. I received an express from His Excellency, much to my satisfaction, having fresh assurance of a sufficient reinforcement and his intention of erecting a fortification at or near the mouth of Ohio----so much the desire of every person, it being a place of great importance, and by having a strong fortification, etc., it would immediately be the mart and key of the western country. All my expectations in my being here have been disappointed (except laying up a considerable quantity of beef ), by lowness of the Ohio, which (is) so remarkable that it would be worth recording, few being able to navigate it with the smallest canoes for several months past.

I shall not, for the future, leave it in your power to accuse me for a neglect of friendship, but shall continue to transmit to you whatever I think worth your notice.

I am, sir, with esteem, yours,

N. B.---As for the description of the Illinois country, which you seem so anxious for, you may expect to have it, by the ensuing fall, as I expect, by that period, to be able to give you a more general idea of it. This you may take for granted: that it's more beautiful than any idea I could have formed of a country almost in a state of nature; everything you behold is an additional beauty. On the river you'll find the finest lands the sun ever shone on. In the high country you will find a variety of poor and rich lands, with large meadows, extending beyond the reach of your eyes, variegated with groves of trees, appearing like islands in the sea, covered with buffaloes and other game. In many places, with a good glass, you may see all those that (are) on their feet in half a million of acres, so level is the country, which, some future day, will excel in cattle.

The settlements of the Illinois commenced about one hundred years ago by a few traders from Canada. My reflections on that head, its situation, the probability of a flourishing trade, the state of the country at present, what (it) is capable of producing, my opinion respecting the cause of those extensive plains, etc., the advantages arising by strong fortifications and settlements at the mouth of Ohio, the different nations of Indians, their traditions, numbers, etc., you may expect in my next.

G. R. CLARK